

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 FRB-01 PA-02 PRS-01 USIA-15

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R 141346Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7977

INFO AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

AMEMBASSY LONDON

UNCLAS ANKARA 1330

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BGEN, ENRG, TU

SUBJECT: MINISTER'S STATEMENT IN PARLIAMENT REGARDING DISPUTE
WITH MOBIL

REFS: ISTANBUL 494 AND 444; ANKARA 698

1. DURING DEBATE IN SENATE FEBRUARY 13 ON BUDGET FOR HIS
MINISTRY, MINISTER FOR ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES, ERHAN
ISIL, RESPONDED TO QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE DISPUTE OVER
THE PRICE FOR IMPORTED CRUDE PETROLEUM, WHICH INVOLVES MOBIL AND BP.
ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, THE MINISTER MADE THE FOLLOWING STATE-
MENT: QUOTE. I DO NOT WANT TO MAKE ANY STATEMENT IN THIS
CONNECTION WHICH WILL BE IN THE FORM OF AN ACCUSATION AGAINST
SPECIFIC FIRMS. ALL THE FACTS ARE QUITE CLEAR AND HAVE BEEN
PRESENTED TO PUBLIC OPINION IN A SUITABLE MANNER. HOWEVER
I AM OBLIGED TO EMPHASIZE THAT TWO FOREIGN COMPANIES AMONG
THIS REFINERY'S PARTNERS RE-CREATING CERTAIN, MAJOR
DIFFICULTIES. THESE MAY NOT BE INSURMOUNTABLE. THERE ARE NOW
REASONS FOR THESE DIFFICULTIES, SUCH AS THE IMPORT PRICE OF CRUDE
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OIL. ACCORDING TO OUR MINISTRY'S GROUP OF EXPERTS, THIS PRICE IS

TOO HIGH. ONE CANNOT MAKE IMPORTS T SUCH PRICES. THUS, THE PROBLEM IS CLEAR* ACCORDING TO CERTAIN PERSONS IN GOVERNMENT SERVICE WHO ARE EXPERIENCED IN THIS FIELD , IF THE ATAS REFINERY HAD BEEN MORE LIKE THE ALIAGA OR IPRAS REFINERIES,IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN EASIER TO FOLLOW A PETROLEUM POLICY. I CANNOT REFRAIN FROM MENTIONING THAT SUCH VIEWS ARE EXTREMELY SERIOUS AND IMPORTANT. THE QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD BUY OUT THE REFINERY IN MERSIN IS ONE WHICH I CANNOT PERSONALLY EVALUTE AND ANSWER AT THE PRESENT MOMENT. I HAVE NOT HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONSIDER WHETHER OR NOT SUCH A REFINERY SHOULD BE NATIONALIZED.

WHAT I WOULD LIKE IS TO SEE THE ATAS REFINERY OPERATED IN THE MANNER SPECIFIED BY LAWS, THAT IT CONFORMS WITH THE RULES, REGULATIONS AND ORDERS OF THE GOVERNMENT. SO LONG AS THESE ARE DONE, NO PROBLEM WILL REMAIN. OTHERWISE, THE LEGAL PROVISIONS AS TO WHAT SHOULD BE DONE EXIST. THERE IS NO NEED FOR ME TO INVENT NEW IDEAS OR FOR MY MINISTRY TO SEARCH FOR NEW MEASURES. WHATEVER IS WRITTEN DOWN IN THE LAWS SHALL BE IMPOSED. UNQTE.

2. DURING THE DEBATE THE MINISTER AT ONE POINT STATED THAT IN HIS PERSONAL BELIEF IT WAS AN INESCAPABLE NEED THAT LIGNITE AND BORAX RESOURCES IN TURKEY BE NATIONALIZED.

3. COMMENT: THE MINISTER'S STATEMENT REGARDING THE PETROLEUM DISPUTE CONTINUES TO MAINTAIN PRESSURE ON THE TWO FOREIGN-OWNED COMPANIES ON THE ISSUE OF PRICE. NOTWITHSTANDING THIS, THE LANGUAGE APPEARS TO BE A BIT MORE CAUTIOUS THAN MANY RECENT STATEMENTS BY TURKISH OFFICIALS ON THIS SUBJECT.HIS WORDS ALSO APPEAR TO HOLD OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT SOME ACCOMMODATION WITH THE COMPANIES MAY YET BE POSSIBLE.

NATIONALIZATION OF LIGNITE AND BORAX RESOURCES IS NOT A NEW ISSUE. PROPOSALS FOR NATIONALIZATION OF THESE INDUSTRIES WERE IN FACT CONTAINED IN THE PROGRAM OF THE RPP-NSP COALITION WHICH TOOK OFFICE IN FEBRUARY 1973.
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